

Who is your best friend? Would you be willing to suffer to help that friend? Is there anyone you don't like? Would you do whatever it takes to help that person if they were in trouble? I know someone who would answer "Yes!" to both questions. He suffered and died in our place to save everyone. Let's read His story.

I have examined this man, and He is innocent!" Pilate argued. "I will have Him flogged. But then I will release Him."

A great roar rose from the crowd. "Kill Him! Kill Him! Release Barabbas to us!" The

crowd shouted louder and louder.

It was the custom to release a prisoner during the Passover season. The crowd was demanding that a terrible criminal be set free, and that innocent Jesus be put to death.

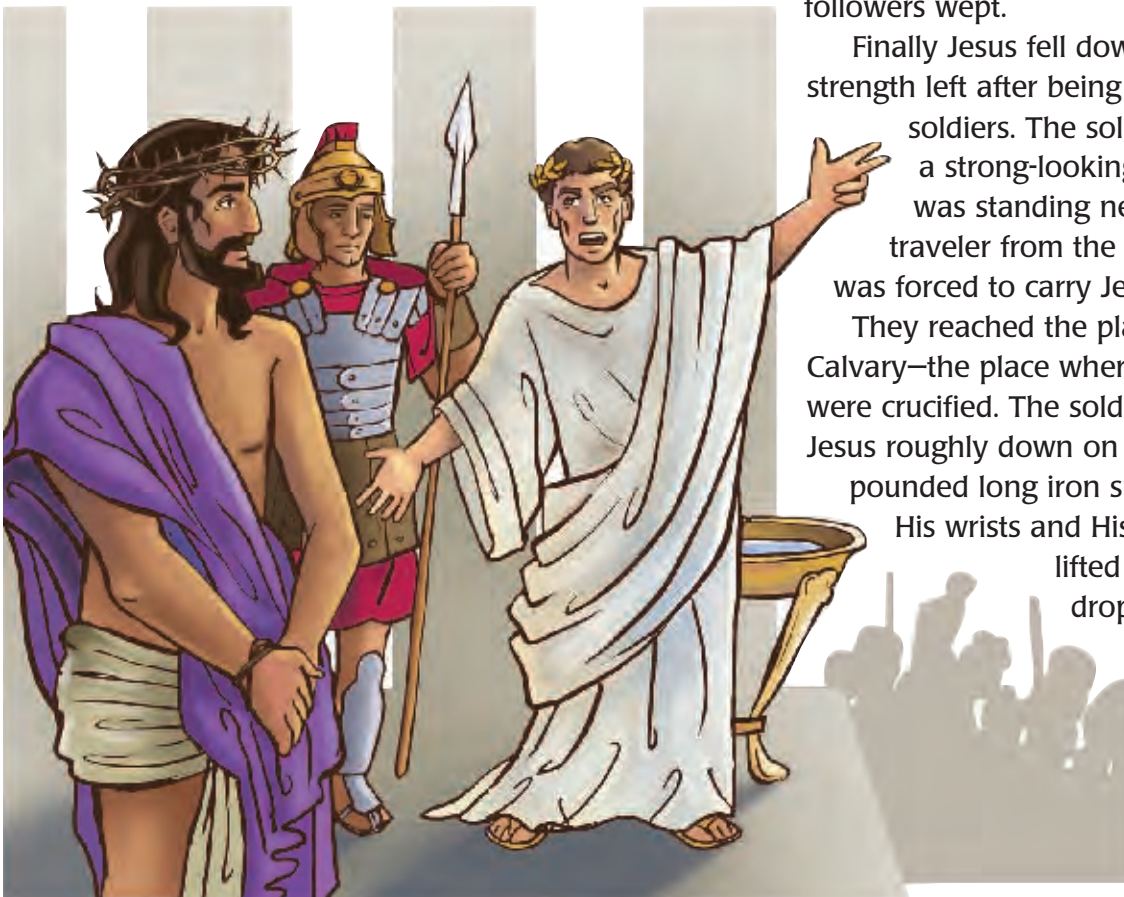
Pilate was the ruler. But he was afraid of the people. And at last he let them have their way. Pilate knew Jesus was not guilty of any crime. But he turned Him over to the mob. And he let Barabbas out of prison.

Thousands of people lined both sides of the road as Jesus struggled along. He staggered under the weight of His cross. Most people shouted and jeered at Jesus. His friends and followers wept.

Finally Jesus fell down. He had no strength left after being beaten by the soldiers. The soldiers grabbed a strong-looking man who was standing nearby. Simon, a traveler from the town of Cyrene, was forced to carry Jesus' cross.

They reached the place called Calvary—the place where criminals were crucified. The soldiers pushed Jesus roughly down on the cross. They pounded long iron spikes through His wrists and His feet. Then they lifted the cross and dropped the bottom

of it into a hole in the ground so it would stand upright. The pain was terrible.



The Message

*I want Jesus to be
my personal Saviour.*

Memory Verse

“ ‘For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life’ ” (John 3:16, NIV).

Crucifixion was the most painful and cruel way to put someone to death. But Jesus prayed, “Father, forgive these people. They don’t know what they are doing.”

The crowd watched as the leaders made fun of Jesus. “He saved other people, but He can’t save Himself!” they jeered. The soldiers made fun of Jesus too. They made a sign and nailed it above His head. “This is the King of the Jews!” it declared.

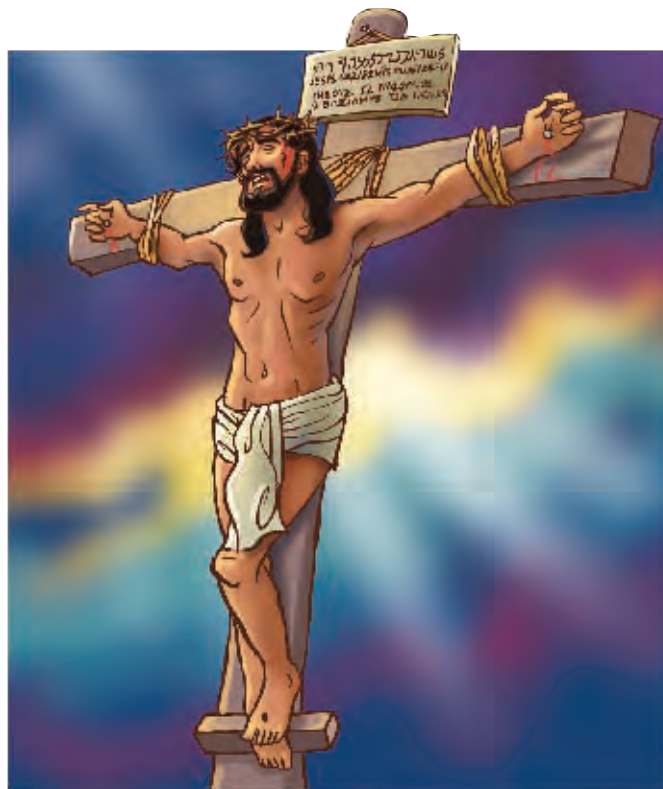
Two thieves were crucified along with Jesus. One of the men mocked Him. “So You’re the Messiah! Prove it by saving Yourself and us too!”

The other thief responded. “We deserve to die,” he protested. “But this Man has not done anything wrong!” He turned to Jesus and said, “Remember me when You come into Your kingdom.”

And Jesus promised him that He would.

At noon, the light from the sun completely disappeared. The darkness lasted until 3 o’clock when Jesus cried, “Father, I entrust My spirit into Your hands!” Then He died.

The earth shook. The curtain in the temple

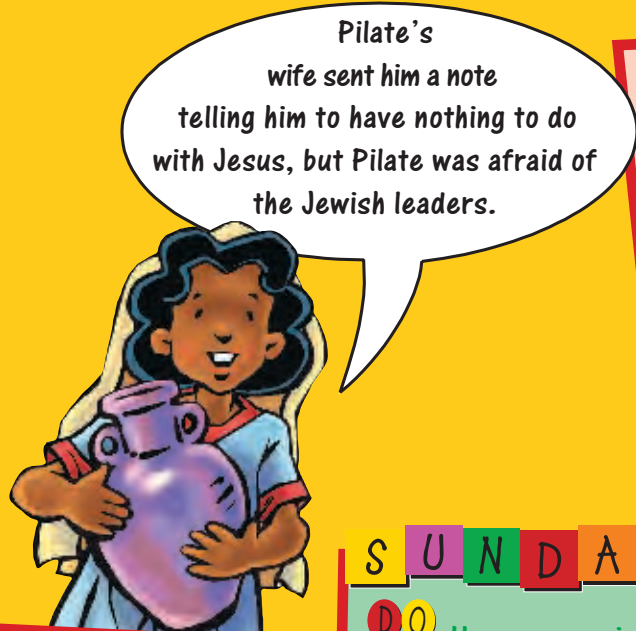


was torn in two from top to bottom. Only God or His angels could have ripped the thick curtain!

But it was not the horrible pain of crucifixion that had killed Jesus. The weight of the sins of all the world had been laid on Jesus—every sin that ever was done, and every sin that ever will be done. Jesus died of a broken heart. It was our sins that killed Him. He died in our place.

A good man named Joseph went to Pilate and asked for Jesus’ body. Joseph put Jesus’ body in a new tomb. One that had been carved out of a rock. The very tomb that Joseph had had made for himself. A big stone was rolled in place to seal the tomb.

It was very late Friday afternoon. All was quiet at last.



Pilate's wife sent him a note telling him to have nothing to do with Jesus, but Pilate was afraid of the Jewish leaders.

S A B B A T H

DO Go for a walk with your family. How many trees can you find and identify? One Bible writer says that Jesus bore our sins "on the tree." (See 1 Peter 2:24.) What does that mean?

READ Sit under a tree and read your Bible story together. Sing "The Old Rugged Cross" before prayer. Thank Jesus for suffering for you.

THINK Why was Jesus willing to suffer so much? Read John 3:16 together. What does that mean to you?

S U N D A Y

DO Have an ongoing "Bible race" all week to answer a daily question. See who can find the text and answer first. Today's question: What did Pilate say to the priests and rulers about Jesus? (Luke 23:14-16)

DO Tape sheets of blank paper together in the shape of a cross. Make a picture of Pilate, Jesus, and the chief priests and rulers on the top sheet. Each day you will add a picture to this cross.

PRAY Say your memory verse for your family before prayer. As you pray, ask Jesus to forgive your sins.

T U E S D A Y

DO Have your family answer the following: How many hours did Jesus hang on the cross? (Mark 15:25, 33) The "third hour" is 9 a.m. Find 9 a.m. on a clock. What time is the sixth hour? What time is the ninth hour?

DO How much time do you spend in worshipping Jesus each day? Keep track for one week, then share it with your family.

DO On your cross shape, draw a picture of Jesus on the cross. Then thank Him for dying for you.

DO Say or sing your memory verse with your family.

M O N D A Y

DO Today's "Bible race" question for family worship is: Who helped Jesus by carrying the cross? (Mark 15:21) On your cross shape, draw a picture of him carrying Jesus' cross. Then thank Jesus for people who help you with hard things.

DO Read or listen to your memory verse in another Bible version. How is it different? How is it the same?

SING Sing "Wide, Wide as the Ocean" (*Sing for Joy*, No. 32).

W E D N E S D A Y

DO Ask your family today's question: What kind of drink was offered to Jesus? Why? (John 1:28, 29) On your cross shape make a picture of soldiers giving that drink to Jesus.

DO Ask an adult to pour some vinegar into a glass. Taste it. Would you want that to help you ease pain? Thank Jesus for today's medicines and doctors.

SING Say your memory verse. Then sing "John 3:16" (*Sing for Joy*, No. 24) together.



THURSDAY

DO Today's Bible race question is: What other things happened when Jesus died? (Matthew 27:50-52) Draw a picture of each on your cross shape.

DO Find out what usually causes an earthquake. Pray for victims of such disasters.

DO Say your memory verse together. Who is "whoever"?



FRIDAY

ASK Ask your family: Why do you think the curtain of the temple was torn in two? (Hebrews 9:12) (See also *The Desire of Ages*, p. 757.)

DO Use your cross-shape pictures to tell this week's Bible story to your family. Afterward, sing songs about Jesus' cross.

DO Ask each family member to write your memory verse on a paper heart. Say: Write your name in place of the words *world* and *whoever*.

PRAY Thank Jesus for His love. Tell Him that you believe in Him, that you want Him to be your personal Saviour.

For Me!

PUZZLE

Directions: Answer the following questions to move from the cross of Jesus to the crown He gives His believers.

1. He was arrested by Roman soldiers.
2. He was tried by Pilate.
3. He was killed on a cross.
4. He was rejected by His own people.
5. Mary's son.
6. John's Master.
7. The rulers hated him.
8. This man loves us.
9. He was whipped for our sins.

